Mental Health Literacy in Ghana: Consequences of Religiosity, Education, and Stigmatization

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Abstract : Although research on the concept of Mental Health Literacy (MHL) is growing internationally, to the authors' best of knowledge, the beliefs and knowledge of Ghanaians on specific mental disorders have not yet been explored. This vignette study was conducted to explore the relationships between religiosity, education, stigmatization, and MHL among Ghanaians using a sample of laypeople (N = 409). The adapted questionnaire presented two vignettes (depression and schizophrenia) about a hypothetical person. The results revealed that more participants were able to recognize depression (47.4%) than schizophrenia (15.9%). Religiosity was not significantly associated with recognition of mental disorders (MHL) but was positively related with both social and personal stigma for depression and negatively associated with personal and perceived stigma for schizophrenia. Moreover, education was found to relate positively with MHL and negatively with perceived stigma. Finally, perceived stigma was positively associated with MHL, whereas personal stigma for schizophrenia related negatively to MHL. In conclusion, education but not religiosity predicted identification accuracy, but both predictors were associated with various forms of stigma. Findings from this study have implications for MHL and anti-stigma campaigns in Ghana and other developing countries in the region.
Keywords : depression, education, mental health literacy, religiosity,schizophrenia
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